



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, March 6, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TBS led with reports that the Ministry of Finance said it is unable to find an allegedly falsified document related to the discounted sale of state land to Moritomo Gakuen. NTV, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi gave top play to reports on a meeting between North Korean leader Kim and South Korean envoys on Monday, saying that North Korea announced through its state media that it reached a satisfactory agreement with South Korea.

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Swift, DM Onodera confirm continued pressure on North

NHK reported on its website that Defense Minister Onodera met with visiting U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Swift at the Ministry of Defense this morning. Onodera reportedly told Admiral Swift that although North Korea and South Korea held talks, it is important to continue to pressure North Korea through joint U.S.-ROK military drills and other measures to abandon its nuclear and missile programs. The admiral reportedly said in response that no particular changes have been made to the plan for joint military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea and confirmed that the U.S. will continue to put pressure on North Korea.

Onodera expresses strong concern about China's growing defense spending

NHK reported at noon that Defense Minister Onodera expressed strong concern about China's plan to increase its defense spending by 8.1% from last year to over 18 trillion yen. Onodera was quoted as telling reporters today: "Against the backdrop of rapid growth in its defense spending, China has been extensively and rapidly strengthening its military power and maritime operations. China's military movements and lack of transparency are giving rise to strong security concerns in Japan and the region as well as the international community." He went on to say: "Some point out that the

details of China's defense spending are unclear and that the disclosed defense spending is only a fraction of its military budget. We will continue to closely monitor China's defense policies, including its defense spending, and work with relevant nations to urge China to improve its transparency and abide by international codes of conduct."

GOJ officials comment on inter-Korean dialogue

Yomiuri reported online on press remarks this morning by Foreign Minister Kono, who commented on yesterday's meeting in Pyongyang between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and two visiting ROK emissaries by saying: "The DPRK is desperate to conduct a charm offensive in the face of enhanced sanctions." Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga said: "South Korea should bear in mind the fact that past dialogue with North Korea has failed to realize denuclearization." The daily added that Tokyo is worried about the rapid North-South rapprochement based on the view that Pyongyang is anxious to weaken trilateral coordination between Tokyo, Washington, and Seoul.

- [Special Advisor Sonoura to visit Australia, other Oceanic countries](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan to issue visas to North Korean athletes for swimming competition in Shizuoka](#) (Yomiuri)

ECONOMY

President Trump says U.S. will not back down on tariffs

NHK reported at noon that concerning domestic and international opposition to President Trump's plan to impose steep tariffs on steel and aluminum products as early as this week, the President said on Monday that nations such as China, Russia, and the EU have trade barriers that are "far worse than tariffs" and he has no plan to back down. The President also reportedly stressed that the biggest problem is China's overproduction of steel products.

In a related item, NHK reported that Prime Minister Abe's special advisor Kawai met with Republican Congressman Nunes in Washington on Monday and expressed concern about the administration's plan to impose tariffs. Kawai reportedly said Japanese companies are concerned and that if other nations take retaliatory measures, it will cause global trade to slow down.

Japanese, Australian leaders discuss U.S. metal tariffs

Nikkei reported online on a teleconference this morning between Prime Minister Abe and his Australian counterpart Turnbull, during which they exchanged views on President Trump's plan to impose heavy duties on steel and aluminum imports and the imminent signing of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. The two premiers reportedly confirmed mutual cooperation for creating a "free and open Indo-Pacific" region.

- [Abe discusses U.S. tariff plan with Australia's Turnbull](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan approves signing of TPP free trade pact without U.S.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan to lead discussions on cryptocurrency regulation at G20 meeting, March 19-20](#) (Sankei)

- [Shifts to generic drugs likely cut medical costs \1.3 trillion in '17: ministry](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Infographic on renewable energy sources](#) (Mainichi)

SCIENCE

- [Japan universities find candidate cancer drugs by using iPS technology](#) (Nikkei)

EDUCATION

- [Ratio of unionized school teachers at record low in 2017](#) (Sankei)
- [Rise in average age of university faculty, MEXT survey](#) (Nikkei)

SOCIETY

PyeongChang Paralympics

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on the PyeongChang Paralympics, which will begin on March 9, focusing on the lifestyles of two Japanese Paralympic athletes. The program first reported on leg amputee Atsushi Yamamoto, who won three medals in track and field in the past Summer Paralympics. Yamamoto will compete in snowboarding in the Winter Paralympics in PyeongChang. The program also reported on former professional snowboarder Daichi Oguri, who lost his right leg three years ago. Through positive thinking, Oguri has gained the opportunity to compete in snowboarding at the Paralympics for the first time. The program said both of them have a strong desire to change society's attitudes toward disabilities.

- [Top court to issue a ruling on Hague related case on March 15](#) (Nikkei)
- [Efficacy of Hague treaty in question, court order for child return all fails](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Foreign technical intern found to have been engaged in decontamination work](#) (Nikkei)
- [Designs by former street artist in padded kimono chosen as Tokyo Olympics mascots](#) (Yahoo!News Japan)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 5, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of interpellations at Upper House Budget Committee, March 5](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [LDP's proposed constitutional provisions on state of emergency to restrict private rights](#) (Mainichi)
- [Democratic Party senior official mentions forming new party with Party of Hope](#) (Mainichi)
- [LDP membership grows to 1.06 million in 2017, increasing five years in a row](#) (Mainichi)
- [Race to the top: The 2018 LDP leadership contest / Ishiba — Anti-Abe pol ready for showdown](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Promote specific discussions on Article 9 to galvanize public opinion](#) (The Japan News)

OPINION POLLS

- [Polls take harsh view of work-style reform bill, Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [48% opposed, 39% in favor of explicitly stating existence of SDF in Art. 9, Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Kyodo News opinion poll & results from Tokyo Shimbun](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

SECURITY

- [Japan official allegedly did not rule out nuke storage site in Okinawa](#) (Kyodo News)
- [MOD studying joint international development of F-2 fighter successor](#) (Sankei)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [Top Japanese diplomat made positive comment on storing nuclear weapons in Okinawa](#) (Okinawa Times, Ryukyu Shimpo)
 - [Okinawa to publish English pamphlet on base issues for governor's U.S. visit](#) (Okinawa Times)
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